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BUDDHISTS SHOULD VISIT THESE FOUR PLACES

By The Ven. PIYADASSI THERA of Vajirarama

WHILE staying in the sal grove at Kusinārā, a few hours before He attained parinibbāna, the Supreme Buddha, at the ripe age of eighty, addressing the Venerable Ānanda, His most dutiful and beloved attendant, said :—

"There are four places, Ānanda, which the devotee should visit with feelings of inspiration (saṁvega): the place at which he can say 'Here the Tathāgata was born', 'Here the Tathāgata attained Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment,' 'Here the Tathāgata set in motion the incomparable Wheel of the Dhamma,' 'Here the Tathāgata finally attained Parinibbāna, the Deathless'. And there will come, Ānanda, to these places, pious Brethren and Sisters of the Holy Order, and devout men and women."

It is significant and interesting to note that the Bodhisatta Gotama was born under trees in a park, practised self-mortification in quest of Enlightenment in the open under trees and attained Buddhahood under a tree, delivered His first sermon to the five ascetics under trees in the deer park, and finally passed away to the Deathless under the twin sāla trees in an open park.

Lumbini, or Rummindei, the local name by which it is now known, is the birth place of Prince Siddhatta Gotama. It is one hundred miles north of Varanasi and within full sight of the snow-crowned Himālayas.

The discovery and identification of the Lumbini park in 1896 A.C. is attributed to that renowned archaeologist, General Alexander Cunningham, owing to whose indefatigable effort and perseverance many a hidden Buddhist holy spot and the sacred body relics of the two chief disciples were brought to light.

At Lumbini what attracts the attention of the pilgrim or the tourist most is the mighty Asoka stone pillar erected some 2,210 years ago. History records that Emperor Asoka after he became a Buddhist gave up *Dig-Vijaya* (conquest of the world) and established *Dharma-Vijaya* (conquest by righteousness) and state pilgrimages. "The course of the state pilgrimages which Asoka instituted, in place of royal hunting parties, and the holy places of Buddhism which he visited were marked by memorials in the form of imperial standards (*dhwaja-stambhas*), splendidly wrought in stone and inscribed with Asoka's edicts or inscriptions recording the Emperor's visit. Many of these still exist in a more or less perfect condition." [1]

Asoka, went in procession to Lumbini with the Venerable Upagupta, his teacher and adviser. The latter pointed out the birth place of Prince Siddhatta Gotama, saying, "*Here, Great King, the Venerable One was born.*" Asoka then paid homage to the holy spot and ordered a column of stone to be erected there to mark this first station of his pilgrimage. This pillar "as crisp as the day when it was cut" has been struck by lightning even when Hiuen Tsiang, the Chinese pilgrim saw it towards the middle of the seventh century A.C. The inscription engraved on the pillar in five lines consisting of 93 Asokan characters reads :—

(1) *Devāna pi yena Piyadasina lājina vīsati-vasābhisitena,*

(2) *atana āgācha mahīyita hida Budhe jāte Sakyamunī ti,*

(3) *silā vigadabhī chā kālāpita silāthabhe cha usapāpite,*

(4) *hida Bhagavaṁ jāte ti Lummini-game yubalike kaṭe,*

(5) *atha-bhāgiye cha.*

The king Devanampiya-Piyadassi, when he was twenty-years-annointed, did (*this place*) the honour of coming (*here*) in person. Because the Buddha was born here, the Sākya saint, he caused a stone surrounding and screening wall to be made [2] and a stone pillar to be set up. Because the Blessed One was born here, he made the village Lummini free of rent and entitled to the (*king's*) eigth share (*of the grain*) [3].

Buddhagayā or *Bodh-Gayā*, as the Indians call it, is the most sacred place to the Buddhists the world over. For it was here that the Master at the age of thirty-five attained Supreme Enlightenment (*anuttaraṁ sammā sambodhiṁ*).

It is recorded in the Buddhist texts that the Prince Gotama at the age of twenty-nine renounced wife,

1. The History of Aryan Rule in India, E. B. Havell, p. 96.

2. Or "he caused a stone and brick wall to be made" as Fleet suggested later in JRAS, July, 1908, p. 832.

3. The Rummindei inscription and the conversion of Asoka to Buddhism by F. J. Fleet, JRAS, April, 1908.

child, crown and opulence, and in the garb of an ascetic retreated into the solitude of the forest in quest of the eternal verities of life. Accompanied by five other ascetics he practised severe asceticism on the bank of the Neranjarā at Uruvela near Gayā. Strenuously and zealously struggling for six long years, he came to death's very door. But self-mortification could not lead him to the desired goal. Abandoning asceticism and extreme fasting, he partook of food. His five companions, disappointed, foresook him. Then, unaided by any teacher, save fixed determination, unflinching energy, and complete faith in his own purity and power, accompanied by none, the Bodhisatta resolved to make his final quest in complete solitude. Cross-legged he sat under the Bodhi tree at Uruvela—" a pleasant spot, soothing to the senses and stimulating to the mind "—making the final effort with the inflexible resolution: " Though only my skin, sinews and bones remain, and my blood and flesh dry up and wither away, yet never from this seat will I stir, until I have attained full enlightenment—*Sammā-Saṃ-Bodhi*." So indefatigable in effort, so unflagging in his devotion was he, and so resolute to realize the Truth.

On a full moon day of May (Vesak) exactly 2545 years ago as the sun rose in a glowing Eastern sky, and the radiant Vesak Full Moon set slowly in the West, Bodhisatta Gotama solved the riddle of life, unravelled the mystery of being by comprehending in all its fullness, the Four Noble Truths,—the Eternal Verities: *Sorrow, the Cause of Sorrow, the Cessation of Sorrow, and the Path leading to the Cessation of Sorrow.* Because of its sacred associations Gayā came to be known as *Buddha Gayā*, and the tree under which he sat and meditated as the Bodhi Tree.

It was here under the Bodhi Tree that the Enlightened One reflected on the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (Dependent Origination), the central conception of His Teaching, in direct and reverse order thus: " When this exists, this is; with the arising of this cause, this effect arises; when this cause does not exist, this effect is not; with the cessation of this cause, this effect ceases."

The present Bodhi tree is one of the successors of the original Bodhi Tree. It is well-known that Sanghamittā, the daughter of Emperor Asoka, brought with her the south branch of the original tree and planted it at Anuradhapura in Ceylon. It still flourishes and is the oldest known tree in the world.

According to the records of the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien and Hiuen Tsang, Emperor Asoka was in the habit of visiting the Maha Bodhi often. The story of the Bodhi Tree and Asoka's visit are represented on the sculptures of Sanchi. It is said that Asoka erected a shrine on the spot where the Master attained Enlightenment and enclosed the Bodhi Tree with a magnificent stone railing. However, no remains of Asoka's shrine have survived. " The existing temple of Bodh-Gayā can hardly be dated earlier than the first century before Christ, but there is good reason to believe that it reproduces the design of the original temple which Asoka built on the same site."[1]

There is a cultural link between Buddha-Gayā and Ceylon, for during the time of Samudragupta in India, Meghavarna, the reigning king of Ceylon, sent an embassy with costly presents to Samudragupta which led to the founding of a monastery at Buddha-Gayā for the residence of the monks from Ceylon, at the request of Meghavanna. Hiuen Tsang writes vividly about this monastery which he visited towards the middle of the 7th century A.C.

" This was the first Sinhala Sanghārāma erected in Northern India but certainly not the first monastic foundation of Ceylon in India, for we learn from the Nagarjunikonda inscription of Virapurisadatta that a spacious monastery called Sinhala-Vihara was built on the bank of the river Krsan in South India at least a century earlier. The foundation of the Mahabodhi Sanghārāma still exists just outside the northern entrance of the Bodhgayā temple, defying the ravages wrought by time and in spite of the neglect of centuries."[2]

Next we come to *Isipatana*, modern Sarnath, where the Master set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma (Dhammacakkapavattana).

Barely two months had passed since His enlightenment when the Buddha left Gayā for far away Banaras, walking a distance of not less than a hundred and fifty miles, to make known the Truth to those five ascetics, His erstwhile companions still steeped in the unmeaning rigours of extreme asceticism.

On a Full Moon Day of July (Asala) at even-tide in the shady deer park at Isipatana, the Buddha promulgated the Dhamma which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle and glorious in the end both in the spirit and in the letter. Avoiding the two extremes of gross sensuality (*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*) and grim asceticism (*attakilamatānuyoga*), the Tathāgata expounded to a sorrow-stricken world the Middle Path (*Majjimāpaṭipadā*)—the Noble Eightfold Way—that leads man to the Eternal Bliss of Peace, Enlightenment and Nibbāna (*Nirodhāya Sambhodāya, Nibbānāya*). This message of the Deer Park still exists in its pristine purity influencing the destinies of mankind.

Sarnath which is situated five miles to the north of Varanasi mark the birth place of the *Dhamma* the Teaching of the Buddha, and the *Sangha*, the Taught. For it was here that the Enlightened One proclaimed the Dhamma for the first time, and sent forth His first sixty disciples with the words:—

" Released are you Bhikkhus from ties both human and divine. Go ye and wander forth for the welfare of the many, the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world. Proclaim the sublime Dhamma; proclaim the life of holiness, consummate, perfect and pure."

Thus did the Supreme Buddha commence His Dhammaduta which lasted to the end of His life.

Asoka the Great came on pilgrimage to this holy spot and caused a series of monuments and a pillar with the lion capital to be erected. The lion capital which is given the pride of place in the excellent Museum at Sarnath is today the official crest of free India. The pillar with the Asokan inscription broken in two stands near the main shrine. The inscription reads " . . . . the Sangha cannot be torn asunder by anyone whatsoever. Whoever, monk or nun, breaks up the Sangha must be made to wear white garments and to take up abode in a place other than a monastery . . ."

Shri Nehru writes in his " Discovery of India," page 44. *" At Sarnath I would almost see the Buddha preaching his first sermon, and some of his recorded words would come like a distant echo to me through two*

1. Aryan Rule in India, E. B. Havell, p. 112.

2. Ceylon Lectures, B. M. Barua, p. 18.

thousand five hundred years. Asoka's pillars of stone with their inscriptions would speak to me in their magnificent language and tell me of a man who, though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor."

Speaking of Asoka's pillars, H. G. Rawlinson writes in "India," pages 84: "These pillars are burnished till the surface is almost like glass, and their high polish so deceived later travellers that they thought they were made of metal. They were surmounted with a bell-capital, an abacus and a symbolic figure, usually a lion. The most striking of these capitals is the one found at Sarnath, with its four magnificent lions upholding a *dharma cakra* or "Wheel of the Law," which was set in motion at this spot. The abacus is decorated with realistic figures. John Marshall speaks with profound admiration of "the masterful strength of the crowning lions, with their swelling veins and tense muscular development," and goes so far as to declare that both bell and capital are "masterpieces in point of both style and technique—the finest carvings, indeed, that India has yet produced, and unsurpassed by anything of the kind in the ancient world."

From Sarnath we come to *Kusinārā* or *Kusinagara* as it is now called. It is in the Uttar Pradesh about 120 miles north-east of Banaras. This being the scene of Buddha Gotama's Mahā Parinibbāna, devout Buddhists all over the world visit this holy spot with feelings of inspiration.

Here the main objects of interest are the *Matha Kunwar ka Kot*, the shrine with the recumbent image of the Master, the Mahaparinirvāna Stupa immediately behind the image house, and the Angāra Cetiya about six furlongs from the stupa, built at the spot where the remains of the Tathāgata were cremated; the Cetiya, of course, is in ruin and the restoration work has already commenced. When A. C. Carlyle discovered the image in 1833 it was in fragments, but he ably restored it. This colossal reclining image of the Tathāgata, 20 feet in length, lying on His right side with the head towards north, evokes nothing but *saṁvega*,—a noble inspiration, and feelings of reverence in the pious pilgrim, and hardly any visitor leaves this shrine without being moved by the glance of the Buddha.

An inscription carved on the stone couch on which the image is placed, in characters of the 5th century A.C., reveals the name of the donor and sculptor :—

> "*Deyadharmoyaṁ mahā-vihāra-swamino Haribalasya Pratimāceyam ghaṭitā Dine . . . . Māthurena.*"

"This is the religious gift of Haribala Svami of the Mahā Vihara. This image is made by Dina of Mathura."[1]

The Mahāparinirvāna Stupa indicates the spot where the All Compassionate Master breathed His last and attained Mahā Parinirvāna "The identity of the place with the site of Parinirvāna was settled beyond doubt by the discovery of inscriptions referring to the Parinirvāna Caitya."

History tells us that Asoka having paid homage to this holy spot caused a stupa to be built, but this has not been brought to light. "The Parinirvāna Caitya, to which the inscriptions refer, dates from the Gupta period and it is not impossible that the Asoka stupa lies buried underneath the later construction."

The Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta of the Dīgha Nikāya, the longest discourse of the Buddhist canon, records all the events that occured during the closing years of His life. It is, indeed, a discourse that not only the devout Buddhist, but the student of Buddhism too should frequently read; for it is replete with important sayings, and the instructive utterances of the Master.

> "*Vayadhammā saṅkhārā appamādena sampādetha.*"

"Transient are all component things. Work out your salvation with heedfulness."

This is the final admonition of the Buddha to His disciples, and this clear injunction covers the entire teaching of the Tathāgata.

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1. Buddhist Shrines in India, D. Valisinha, p. 95.

BHIKKHUS MUST BE SINGLE IN MOTIVE

By SRAMANERA JIVAKA, (M.A., M.B., B.Ch.)

NEW ideas always meet with strong opposition. The thought of any change in tradition is regarded almost as a sacrilege, and especially is it true where religious tradition is concerned. To this Buddhism is no exception.

The letter of the written Law and the tradition of the Sangha is sacrosanct; despite that the tradition of the Sangha, incidently, varies with the different countries where it is established and may, indeed, be quite contrary to that in other Buddhist countries.

Today, however, there is a crisis not only in world affairs, they have become too common to have much attention paid to them,—but also in Buddhist affairs. The assault on Tibet and the ruthless attempt to exterminate the great religion of that country, which has developed after its own fashion and which is complementary to that elsewhere, without which Buddhism would not be complete, and the smothering of Buddhism in China by the Communist indoctrination of the youth, leaves a large gap in that religion which previously numbered more adherents than any other.

In those countries, on the other hand, where it has been the national religion for some 2000 years, it has inevitably become fixed into a set pattern, unaltered amid changing circumstances and doomed to die or to become a living fossil unless the members of the Sangha realise the gravity of the crisis through which they are passing and are prepared to give up something of the old for the sake of the very existence of the Dharma that they love and cherish, and for the sake, too, of its propogation in new fields to the West.

In my previous article *Begging in the Modern World*, (See August Issue—*Ed.*) I tried to show how the condition of mendicancy could scarcely be adhered to in certain parts of the globe, and offered a solution to the *impasse* which the Buddha's conception of a mendicant Order must inevitably produce today.

In this article I wish to deal with the question of ordination; for it is on members of the Sangha that the life and future of Buddhism depends and, therefore, sincerity of motive,

above all, on entering upon it is required.

In some countries monks are all too ready to admit to the Order anyone and everyone who applies to them. In some countries, too, a temporary "going from home to homelessness" is not only permitted but encouraged, despite that such a practice is quite at variance with the spirit of the Buddha's Teaching. For world renunciation was not to be lightly undertaken, nor temporarily, but it was to be a sign that the postulant had seen the shallowness and illusion of worldly pleasures and was prepared to go all out to attain the Real, to win Enlightenment, by directing his attention away from the world, developing detachment and spending his life largely in meditation for that purpose, while at the same time not neglecting to preach.

Anyone who "renounces" the world for a brief period of time is not ordained for this purpose at all, but simply for the experience derived therefrom, in much the same way as adolescents join the Boy Scouts or are called up for military service for a brief time. That many thereafter are encouraged to remain monks does not justify the practice. The Sangha, moving out into new fields to spread the Dharma, must be single in motive and sincere in the moderate asceticism of the Order, so as to be an example to those whom they wish to convert, and so as to live up, unmistakably to the ideals which they are preaching. This is all important if Buddhism is to capture the Western mind.

Again, too, in this period of "new conversions" that are showing a tendency to spring up *en masse* in India at the present time, some of these new converts are clamouring for ordination, but the motive largely seems to be for finding a means of social security, of being kept by others and not for the purpose of renunciation of the world through a genuine belief in its falsity. This low motive, indeed, was first discovered even in the Buddha's own day and roundly condemned by Him. "How can you, foolish person, embrace the religious life in so well taught a doctrine and discipline for your belly's sake? This will not do, foolish one, for converting the unconverted, for augmenting the numbers of the converted." (Maha Vagga I, 49).

The Buddha required emphatically a four months probationary period for a convert, who had to live with a group of monks and during that time he was to be tried and tested and weighed, as to suitability for admission into the Order. This requirement is to be found in many parts of the Scriptures, yet how often is it adhered to today? Not the least is it ignored in some Theravadin countries where strict obedience to the letter of the Law in some other respects is required.

Rules for the acceptance of postulants with Lower Ordination in view, and again for proceeding to Higher Ordination need radically re-examining and laying down anew. During the four months probationary period the postulant might well be expected to maintain himself while being given shelter within a vihara. This, it will be argued, will create hardship for some genuinely too poor to fulfil it. But anyone sufficiently determined to be ordained can go out to work until, by dint of effort and self-denial he has saved enough for his food for four months. Surely this would be a good preliminary test of his motives, and would eliminate all those who expect to be kept both then and thereafter.

Next, during his probationary period he should be tried for his fortitude. Menial work, heavy work and study should all be part of his training and if he passes this test then it is likely that as a sramanera, when his lot is eased a little, his character will have begun to mould itself along the right lines, with his sense of values corrected. Then, when he becomes a full member of the Sangha, pride, love of ease, desire for security, contentment with being looked after and provided for, a wish to remain a student all his life, will not be in evidence. He will be hardened and full of vigour and determination to go forth and preach, while meditating during some of the hours in which others sleep.

What, then, of the University life led by so many young bhikkhus after the completion of which they tend to take employment as teachers and eventually are tempted to shed their robes again? The problem lies between having uneducated or half-educated members of the Sangha and the foregoing state of affairs which suggests very forcibly that in many cases monkhood is being used merely for the purpose of obtaining a University degree. *The solution might be in having Universities for Buddhist monks solely, whose degrees are not to be recognised outside the Sangha, so that ordinary teaching jobs are not open to graduates.*

It may be argued that bhikkhu-teachers help to spread the Dharma, but against this is the certain horror that the Buddha Himself would have exhibited at the idea of His bhikkhus taking secular paid posts after world renunciation. Bhikkhu-Teachers, yes, but not in paid employment, and certainly not maintaining themselves at a worldly level with the proceeds of their employment.

Here the Sangha Trust Fund, outlined in my previous article, would play its part. No one should be allowed to earn money for himself; it should be placed monthly in the Sangha Fund, preferably paid in directly by the employers, and his allotted maintenance allowance paid out to him, no notice being taken of the respective amounts. At least, then, there would be no temptation to earn a "good living" or to support relatives as is even done by some bhikkhus. Nor could any private fund be built up, thus making a travesty of world renunciation as is done at present. A sramanera, if capable of earning by writing or teaching, should hand his proceeds over to his acariya or uppajjhaya, who then uses it to assist the cost of his maintenance.

There now arises another question. How long can that admirably conceived body, the Maha Bodhi Society, continue to pay monthly sums to the bhikkhus who join it, the numbers of which are steadily growing? It certainly has no limitless bank balance and the very existence of such a fund tends to encourage young men to desire to become monks under its auspices, in the surety of their receiving a living wage. Would it not be better if it were to confine its maintenance allowances to its own officers, in Maha Bodhi institutions the world over? Then it would have more reserves for its other projects.

Once again the call must ring out to those who have lived too long without regard to the changing world situation, who have buried their heads in the sand, refusing to face the facts. Is pride to be allowed to stand in the way of saving the Dharma from extinction, pride, one of the strongest *asavas*? Is adherence to the mere letter of the Law? Is personal and national prejudice? Younger members of the Sangha who are travelling beyond the con-

fines of their own countries, appear to realise something, if not all, of the gravity of the situation. It is for them to set the example primarily of vigour and asceticism and the spirit of world renunciation, and then it is for the older members to convene and face the facts and try to find a solution.

The Wheel must be spun anew ere it comes to a stop. Herein are merely suggestions for turning it again. Let those more competent put their hands to it.

A WOMAN FROM THE WEST DISCOVERS BUDDHISM

By MONICA CAMERON-BURROWS,

(118, *Knollmead, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey, England*)

IT might be assumed that, being the child of English middle class parents, my religious, moral and ethical training would follow the conventional pattern of the group.

This was not so because my father had little say in my training and my mother, who was rather a " blue stocking," brought me up to be a freethinker. She had, in her youth, been expected to attend church three times each Sunday and whether this family pressure had made her revolt against the Christian teaching or whether she came to some sort of enlightenment on her own I cannot say but the fact remains she never, at any time compelled me to accept any particular line of thought. All she insisted was that I keep an open and unprejudiced mind and strive to seek the truth, rejecting that which my reason told me was false.

This I have endeavoured to do although my non-acceptance of some of the beliefs and statements of others has been the cause of much misunderstanding between myself and more orthodox minded people. It began when I was about seven or eight years old. My father, who was at that time an officer in the Royal Air Force, was posted to Dublin (this was during the troubles of the 1920's) and my mother and I went with him on this occasion.

We lived in a small village a few miles from Dublin and I attended the only local school. This was managed by a group of nuns under the leadership of a Mother Superior. On the first day of my attendance at the school I received instructions on how to pray, make the sign of the Cross and genuflect before an image of the Virgin. As I had never been expected to do anything like this before it was all very confusing but I tried to do as I was told.

The time came, as it inevitably would, when I started asking questions about this ritual and the questions I asked were the cause of no small measure of embarrassment to the nuns and the answers I received were most unsatisfactory. My persistent questions, and non-acceptance of the answers, made the relationship between us rapidly deteriorate and there came a time when the Mother Superior asked my mother to remove me from the school, explaining as she did so that she could not have the other children disturbed by my questions.

After that episode my mother decided that it would be better if I received my education from private tutors, until we returned to England, after which I attended state schools and, eventually, college. My life since has followed the usual course of an ordinary English-woman, enlivened now and then when I have had the good fortune to encounter another individual who could discuss the nature of things without becoming enraged by my somewhat unorthodox ideas. People have at best regarded me as an eccentric and therefore to be humoured, or at the worst a blasphemer and, as such, to be avoided.

I now have a daughter of my own and I have tried to help her grow up to have a mind free from prejudice and fixed attitudes and I think that some success has been achieved in this direction. When she was fifteen she asked me what, or who, was " God " and, although I had been expecting this question to come sooner or later, I was, nevertheless, undecided about my answer—was I to tell her to attend church and there learn the usual ideas about " God " or was I to tell her what I knew to be the truth and instruct her in my un-belief. I decided that it would not be fair to her to tell her only one side of the story; so on that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday morning, I gave her an outline of the great religions and the beliefs which formed their dogmas. She asked me many questions, as was to be expected, and I tried my best to answer them truthfully and without bias. The time came when she asked me what I believed and that is when, for the first time, I really had to take stock of my ideas and try to crystallize them. I told her that, after much thought and speculation, I found that I could not believe in a " God " nor " heaven and hell " nor could I accept the idea of a " beginning and end." I told her that my concept of the cosmos was that it was subject to perpetual change and was endless and that nothing existed that did not have some relationship to the rest and it was in fact an everlasting one-ness. I explained that even the so called " soul " was part of this one-ness and it, also, was governed by change, either for the better or for the worse. Our talk continued, in this vein, for several hours and we had many more sessions during which I found myself learning while I was teaching, much to my amazement and my daughter's amusement. I warned my daughter, however, that although she might find my hypothesis attractive she must not accept it without first examining it in the light of logic and reason and that if she could not accept part, or all of it she had the right to reject and form her own hypothesis.

This was the position up to two years ago when I, by chance, bought a book which has changed the whole of my everyday pattern of living. The book is not a very long one and is intended as only an introduction to the subject it covers. The name of the book is " Buddhism " and it was written by Mr. Christmas

Humphreys and is both interesting and instructive. I would state, categorically, that I had never, before this time, read any books on Buddhism and that I knew absolutely nothing about the concepts and precepts laid down by the Enlightened One, although I had made a study of the Western philosophies. So it can be imagined with what delight and wonder I read the book. It was wonderful to discover that, although I had found the Path on my own, it was the right Path and I was not, as I had assumed, alone in my un-belief and that my un-belief was in fact a belief which gave the utmost satisfaction to millions of people. This discovery made me happy in many other ways, for it can be very lonely trying to maintain a particular line of thought against the pressure of the rest of the social group. One can in fact be made to feel an "outcast" and that is not a good thing from whichever angle one views it. I must confess my ego was shaken when I discovered the line of thought I had pursued was not my own original and unique effort, but this no doubt was good for me.

Since first reading that little book I have read others, with avidity, but have only managed those in English translation and have skimmed only the surface of the boundless wisdom to be found in the Buddhist time Scriptures; this is a defect I hope and application will remedy. Having found a haven in the Dhamma I am at peace with myself. My only wish now is to increase my knowledge of the Dhamma by studying "the Word of the Buddha" as spoken by Him. To this end I must acquire a fair knowledge of the language in which He spoke. I trust that I shall be able to visit Burma, Thailand or Ceylon, where Theravada Buddhism is best understood and practised, where I can sit at the feet of a teacher who will have the sympathetic understanding and patience to teach a woman of the West the Dhamma in its pristine purity.

I would, in, conclusion, like to acknowledge the instruction and guidance I have been receiving from the Venerable H. Saddhatissa at the London Buddhist Vihara where I have spent many happy and enlightening hours and have had the wonderful experience of following the Eight Precepts on Dhammacakka Day.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PURITY IN THE BUDDHA-DAHMMA

By AMARASIRI WEERARATNE

WE all realise that cleanliness is essential for good health. It is common knowledge that dirt and filth breed disease. Therefore we wear clean clothes and eat pure food, that is food free from germs and bacteria. We also realise the value of what is called environmental sanitation. Hence we take care to live in an atmosphere that is free from bad odours coming from filthy drains and so forth.

Thus we see that for purposes of avoiding disease and the consequent suffering, it is necessary to seek cleanliness. This is with regard to external cleanliness. Yet do we pay sufficient attention to cleanliness of the mind and mental health? Do we take sufficient care and precautions to avoid the impurities that soil the mind and cause suffering and pain that follows a diseased mind?

The purification of the mind is the fundamental object of the Buddha's teachings. Hence it is said "Sacitta pariyodapanam etam Buddhānusāsanam." To purify the mind is the message of the Buddhas. When the celebrated commentator Buddhaghosa arrived at Maha Vihara, Anuradhapura, in the 5th century A.C. and undertook to translate the Sinhala Commentaries to Pali, the Elders at the Maha Vihara requested him to compile a treatise on the Buddha-Dhamma, so that he may prove his fitness for the task. Thereupon the Venerable Buddhaghosha compiled the well known treatise called the "Visuddhi Magga." The Path of Purity, which has since become a standard work on the Buddha-Dhamma. This title alone emphasizes the nature of the Buddha-Dhamma, viz. that it is a systematic course of purifying the mind.

Any one who is familiar with even the elementary teachings of the Buddha realises that on account of the arising of greed, ill-will and ignorance the mind of man gets soiled and becomes impure. According to the Buddha-Dhamma purity as well as impurity is the result of one's own volitional activities. It is not the work of a Creator-God, not has a Saviour anything to do with it. Man is not besmirched with the original sin of his ancestors. These beliefs constitute mere mythical superstition. On the contrary the Buddha teaches that the mind of man is radiant and untarnished at birth, but gets sullied in course of time on account of the arising of greed, hate, and delusion. As Vishnusharman the Sanskrit author remarks in his Hitopadesha, with the advance of years all faculties of man such as hearing, sight, etc., deteriorate. But there is one thing which does not deteriorate but grows with cumulative force, and that is Trishna—the thirst for the gratification of sensual desires.

Thus the thoughtful seeker after Truth finds himself a man fallen into a cess-pool of passions (kleshas) and defilements. Hence he aspires to purify himself from the dirt and to cleanse himself. The Bodhisatva when he was the Ascetic Sumedha puts this position succintly thus:—

> Just as a man fallen amongst filth beholding a brimming lake,
>
> If he seek not that lake, the fault is not in the lake,
>
> So there exists the Lake of Nirvana, that washes the stains of sin.
>
> If a man seek not that Lake, the fault is not in the Lake of Nirvana.
>
> (*Buddhavamsa* 24).

In order to counteract the three chief evil mental states that defile the mind the Master advocates the cultivation of three mental states that are their very antithesis viz. Dāna (generosity) Sīla (Virtue) and Bhāvanā (Meditation). It is a gradual process extending for a long time in proportion to the state of defilement of one's mind.

It is by thought, word and deed that we defile ourselves. Mental defilements consist of covetousness, ill-will, and erroneous views. Verbal defilements comprise lying, harsh language that hurts others feelings, and vain talk. Deeds which defile the mind are killing living beings, stealing, and sexual misconduct. Meticulously avoiding these the earnest Buddhist must cultivate generosity in place of covetousness, good-will in place of ill-will and correct views in place of erroneous views. Avoiding lying he practises truthfulness, instead of harsh talk he cultivates gentleness in language and instead of profitless talk he cultivates talk that is in conformity with the Dhamma and the Vinaya. Avoiding killing, stealing and sexual impurity he abstains from these vices and puts good-will, generosity and chastity into practice.

Avoiding false views he endeavours to understand the Four Noble Truths, viz: the universality of suffering, its cause, cessation, and the way leading to cessation. In this way he avoids defilements and cultivates clean traits of mind by careful selection. In this alone lies the salvation of mankind from sin, error, and consequent suffering. In the choice of food we avoid the unwholesome and select valuable items rich in vitamins. Similarly in the entertaining of thoughts too we have to be selective and cultivate the habits of entertaining wholesome thoughts, because ultimately it is these that go to form our character—whether it be noble or ignoble.

Hence it is important to be ground in Right Views (Sammā Ditthi) and to entertain Right Thoughts (Sammā Saṅkappa). By this method one enters the Noble Eightfold Path which is the one and only path for the purification of beings and which leads them to the extinction of suffering. It ultimately leads to Paññā (wisdom) *i.e.* Vidarshana-maya paññā—wisdom derived by Vippassanā Meditation by which one realises that all things are impermanent, sorrow-fraught, and without any abiding entity or substance. It is this wisdom which purifies. Hence the saying of the Master "Paññāya parisujjati."

The Brahmins of the Buddha's time believed in the efficacy of purification through bathing in sacred rivers. This practice has found its way to Palestine, and has been modified and accepted in the Christian rite of baptism, which is said to cleanse man of the original sin of his mythical ancestors, viz: Adam and Eve. To the misguided Brahmins who sought purity by bathing in sacred waters the Buddha said "The Bahuka, the Adika, the Gayā, the Sundarika, even the Saragu or Prayāga, as also the Bahumati, cannot purify the fool of his sin, bathe he himself ever so often. What can Sundarika do? What Prayāga, What the river Bahuka? No river can cleanse the doer of evil, the man of malice, the perpetrator of crime . . . Have the bath here, even here O Brahmin. Be kind to all beings, If thou speakest not false, if thou killeth not life, if thou taketh not what is not given thee, secure in self denial, what wouldst thou gain by going to Gayā. Any water is Gayā to thee."

If bathing in the Ganges could confer purity, then the fishermen would indeed be the most meritorious, not to mention the fishes and tortoises which are day and night swimming. If on the other hand vegetarianism constitues holiness and purity, then the bulls must be the holiest, but they are no more free from greed, anger, and ignorance than are the carnivorous animals.

The Buddha's teachings comprise a Middle Way avoiding all extremes and absurdities. It is the rational and clear enunciation of the Noble Eightfold Path, consisting of Virtue (Sīla) Concentration (Samādhi) and Wisdom (Paññā). There are no divine mysterics or blind faith here. Irrational and absurd dogmas such as virgin birth, existence of an All Powerful and Merciful God who cannot stand the scrutiny of reason find no place here. The Buddha teaches liberation without a vicarious Saviour, and this liberation can be attained on this life itself through purification of the mind, by the exercise of our faculties, without prayer, sacrifices or ceremonies, and without divine grace.

BUDDHISM AND YOGA

By D. B. JAYASINGHE, Weboda.

THE learned and much respected Maha Nayaka Thera of the Vajirarama has drawn our attention to the basic position of Jhana in present day Buddhism. He has quoted chapter and verse to show that one cannot become even a Sovan without first attaining Jhana.

Some time ago the Siyane Vipassana Bhavana Society also quoted chapter and verse to show that one may become not only a Sovan but even an Arhat without resorting to Jhana at all. Thus we may safely expect a battle of books in the near future. But will such a battle royal decide anything so long as it is conducted by those who are bound by the strict letter of the law. Will it not result only in providing us with the undignified spectacle of responsible Buddhists publicly hurling self-contradictory texts at one another?

From this point of view a layman who remembers the history of his religion and the Buddha's warning to the Kalamas against placing too much reliance on texts as such, may be in a better position to offer a more balanced view. After all a method is best judged by its results and as we have so far failed to produce a single Arhat with or even without Iddhi powers it may very well be that we have all misunderstood the Buddha's unique methodt.

One would have thought that this question had been settled long ago because Buddhagosha begins the Visuddhi Marga with five quotations from the Buddha which show that Jhana is not the only way to Nirvana. From them he selects for comment one that includes Jhana and that too by equating it with mental development. The reason for preferring this to the Sathipattana method may be seen in that passage of the Mahawansa which says that he knew and took particular pride in reciting the Yoga Sutras of Pathanjali by heart. His

partiality for Pathanjali is mainly responsible for the present impasse.

We know that at the very beginning of His search the Buddha learnt the Eight Samapathis from Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputra and that He finally rejected them. Ultimately He developed an entirely new and much more efficacious method which we now know as the Sathipattana method. Indeed it was so new and so efficacious that thoughtful Indians began to give up their Yoga practices and follow the Buddha in ever increasing numbers. The Buddha's undoubted successes can be explained only on the footing that this method differed radically from the methods then existing.

If on the other hand we maintain that Jhana is the corner stone of Buddhism then we must admit that the Buddha's only contribution was the ninth Samapathi. Is it conceivable that the Buddha brought about a revolution in Indian religious thought by the simple process of adding an extra Samapathi to the then existing eight? If so, then why did we raise such violent objections to Sir Radhakrishnan's view that the Buddha was only a continuator or critic? Surely we cannot have it both ways. We must either exclude Jhana and uphold the originality of the Buddha or look upon Him as one of the many reformers of Hinduism—which is precisely what the Hindus themselves say. And isn't it surprising that the very first thing which the Buddha rejected has now become the corner stone of his religion? Let us therefore get our bearings straight.

What is the corner stone of Buddhism? There can be no two answers to this question because the Buddha has already given it in the Culla Sachaka Sutra. As for the method the Buddha has said that the Sathipattana is the one and only way. Thus the Anatta Vadha and the Sathipattana represent the theory and practice of Buddhism and therefore the latter should only be interpreted in terms of the former.

Unfortunately it is in terms of Jhana that the Sathipattana is interpreted today. But the moment we try to read Jhana into the Sathipattana we are in for a number of surprises. For instance, Sathi means memory. There can be no doubt about it because Sathi has been defined by being compared to the remembering of a verse learnt in childhood. But the Sathipattana as we understand it today ignores memory completely. Nor can we blame the translator for calling it the Way of Mindfulness because even the commentary ignores memory. Is it surprising then that the result of trying to practise a Sathipattana which ignores Sathi is not unlike that of trying to play Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark?

Sometimes we are told that Jhana is achieved through one-pointedness of thought. But how can we do this by trying to focus the attention alternately on inhalation and exhalation which are diametrically opposed to each other. In the case of the thirty six other Karmasthanas mentioned by Buddhagosha success depends on rivetting the attention on the same idea or object and for as long a time as possible, the longer the time the deeper being the Jhana induced. But in the case of the Sathipattana we may pass from one object to another as soon and as often as we like.

Sometimes we are told that the correct method is to suppress the thought process altogether. How can the Way of Mindfulness lead to a state of mindlessness? We can understand the Yoga view point that the thought process can be stopped by stopping the breath and that breathing can be stopped by learning the art of controlling it. But we make no attempt to stop the breath but still claim that breathing will stop automatically on reaching the fourth Jhana. We are also told that all we have to do to attain Jhana is to remove the Hindrances which hold it down, whereupon it will emerge from some mysterious hiding place. In that case Jhana must have been there all the time.

This goes against the grain of the Anatta Vadha which says that we have only five Skandhas and nothing else. Nor can we escape by equating Jhana with Vinnana because the former is hindered by the Neevaranas and the latter is not. This is the chief difference between Jhana and the Sathipattana. Whatever is achieved in the Sathipattana has to be developed from scratch; the Yogi is only trying to unearth something which he foolishly thinks is already there. How did the one and only way of the Master become such a tangled web? Let us ask our authority on tangled webs.

Buddhagosha appears to have written his commentary on the Sathipattana with his partiality for Pathanjali at the back of his mind. He begins by saying that the Buddha did not mean what he said when he characterised the Sathipattana as the one and only way. He wants us to believe that the Buddha said so because it is not a double way, or because it is the way of the One Buddha, or because it leads to the one Nirvana, or because one must travel alone on this way, etc., fantastic explanations which remind one of a desperate lawyer trying to hide the truth with several alternative answers. Having thus paved the way for saying that there may yet be another way he blandly asserts that the one and only way of the Buddha is only the preliminary part of the Noble Eightfold Path citing as authority a text which could have existed only in his own imagination. Having thus given the Sathipattana a subordiate position in the Noble Eightfold Path we are left to infer that Samadhi is the final and most important part.

Thus the Sathipattana is reduced to the status of a stepping stone to Jhana. But the Sathipattana occupies a pre-eminent position in the heart of every Buddhist and this displacement must have been keenly resented. So the position was reversed and we have been taught all along to attain Jhana and then to practise Vipassana. But it is too late to delete from our books Buddhagosha's way of Sathi first and then Samadhi. And so we have now compromised by regularising both ways saying that Sathi produces momentary Jhana. But this is only a temporary expedient which cannot last. It is not surprising therefore that the Burmese have started a movement to cut out Jhana altogether. And rightly so because all the trouble was caused by Buddhagosha trying to graft Yoga on to Buddhism. Why should we at this stage volunteer to carry Buddhagosha's baby?

It only remains to show that the Sathipattana is a self-sufficient method which needs no aid from Jhana or from anything else for that matter. The wise men of China seem to have thought that what a man needed most to know was the future. Thus their specia-

lity was divination. Present day philosophers having no means of reading the past or foreseeing the future will contend that it would be more to the point to know the present.

On the other hand the Buddha appears to have held that the most important knowledge a man can and should acquire was a knowledge of his past lives, for, then he will be able to profit by his mistakes and regulate his present conduct so as to ensure his best interests not only in this life but even in the hereafter. Our present memory is not a suitable instrument for this purpose as a little introspection will show that it forgets much more than it remembers.

Moreover, we have in this life alone accumulated a vast array of trivial memories which help us to carry on the activity which we call life. It is these memories which really block our way to the past. What is most important, however, is that these memories are directly responsible for fostering in us a deep rooted belief in the existence of an illusionary self which in turn is directly responsible for all our sorrow. Therefore the memory has to be gently but firmly suppressed and the only question is how.

It is at this point that the Sathipattana steps in to say that the best method is always to act, feel and think without paying any heed to the way in which we acted, felt and thought in similar circumstances before. By continually focussing the attention on our acts, feelings and thoughts we prevent the memory from interfering. Nor have we anything to fear by losing this memory for it will only lead to opening up a much wider memory of which our present memory is only a mere shadow. And there will be no cause for sorrow thereafter and for ever more. Such a man will undoubtedly be unfit to live as a householder. And why should he seeing that he is already an Arhat ? It may have been possible to support this interpretation with suitable texts if Buddhagosha had not taken the precautionary measure of burning them.

[* *This correspondent's exegesis is private, esoteric, and unsupported by canonical texts on which a scientific understanding of the Dhamma ultimately depends. His opinions on jhāna cannot be maintained in the light of the Buddha's definition of the 8th path-factor, sammāsamadhi, right concentration, as the four jhānas, in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya (cited in the Mahānāyaka Thera's article in our last issue) and in Sutta No. 8, Avijjāvagga, Magga-samyutta. This definition of the Buddha is clear , there is no sammāsamadhi declared by him which is below the first jhāna. It is indubitable that jhāna is part of the Ekāyana Magga, The Only Way, The Middle Way, the Eightfold Path. Without jhāna the Noble Path will not have eight but seven factors. To say that jhāna does not belong to the Ekāyana Magga is a gross travesty of the Master's teaching. Now, a few words about the Ven. Buddhaghosa Thera. It is quite possible, in spite of what J. H. Woods says in the introduction to his translation of the Yoga Sutras, and what Kosambi Dharmānanda says in his introduction to the Harvard edition of the Visuddhi Magga, that the Ven. Buddhaghosa Thera was fully conversant with the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, according to the information in the Culavaṁsa. But there is no doubt that the Ven. Buddhaghosa Thera set forth the ideas of the Mahāvihāra Theras under whose guidance he wrote and not Hindu ideas. This he has explicitly stated and is borne out very amply by the contents of the Visuddhi Magga and his other commentaries. We dissociate ourselves from the views on the Ven. Buddhaghosa Thera, the Satipaṭṭhāna, and the Dhamma in general expressed in this correspondent's letter, which we publish only to avoid our being charged with any desire to deny him publicity.*—THE EDITOR, " The Buddhist ".]

NEWS AND NOTES

DHARMAPALA DAY

THE annual Dharmapala Day was celebrated in Colombo at the Victoria Park with a public meeting presided over by the Ven. Dr. Parawahera Vajiranana. The Ven. Balangoda Ananda Metteya and the Ven. Hedigalle Pannatissa, of Sanchi, the Hon. Mrs. Vimala Wijewardene, the Hon. Mr. P. B. Kalugalle and Mr. C. D. S. Siriwardena spoke. On the same day the Hon. Mrs. Wijewardena changed Turret Road, Colombo into Dharmapala Mavata.

—*Cor.*

FROM FREE CHINA

FIVE years ago the Ven. Chihhang wrote his last will, asking that after his death his corpse be placed inside two big earthern vats. After three years the vats should be opened. If the original body had corrupted, he asked that it be sealed again and buried. If not, it was to be gilded and put in a shrine. At the third and fourth years after the death, his disciples met and decided not to open the vat. This year, the fifth year, all met again and the decision was to open the vats. The vats were opened. The most surprising thing was that not only the flesh was not corrupted but also the hairs, eyebrows and finger nails were all lengthened by an inch. The Ven. Chihhang was originally stout, but his corpse became very thin with the flesh as tough as plastic. The joints of the arms and legs were soft. All the newspapers reported this with headlines and thousands of visitors came daily. The mountain path was crowded and another return path established. Now the body was painted and gilded by a famous artist and enshrined. A ritual of three weeks will be established for commemoration. His disciples are now planning to establish a middle school, a hospital, an orphanage and home for the elderly.

* * * *

The Kungyi Broadcast Station added to their programme a Buddhist section daily. Nowadays they invite Ven. Chihtao to explain the Chapter of Avalokitesvara of the Punderika Sutra.

* * * *

College students of Taiwan University, Normal University, Political University, Law and Commerce College, Tungwu University, Medical College, Art Academy and Tanchiang Academy picnicked at Peitou on May tenth. There were more than fifty students. Prof. H. T. Pa of the Normal University gave a lecture on Chan Buddhism.

* * * *

The Buddhists of Taichung celebrated Buddha Day and the Anniversary of the Chichkuang Buddhist Library. They also preached for four days. The speakers were all girl members of the Lotus Club. The subjects were " Rituals and Buddhism " by Miss L. Y. Huang and Miss C. C. Yang, " Bliss " by Miss F. C. Lin and Miss S. C. Peng, " Bad from Wrong Ideas and Good from Awareness " by Miss S. C. Lin and Miss M. Lin, " Buddhism's History in China " by Miss N. Shih and Miss A. Yang, " Home Jewels " by Miss L. H. You and Miss S. Chang, " To Do Good by Learning Buddhism " by Miss J. Y. Lin and Miss A. H. Wang and " The Process of Learning Buddhism" by Miss A. T. Yang and Miss L. T. Lin. There was an evening performance on the fifth day with very interesting songs and dances.

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Buddhists in Shulin established a Buddhist Library. They had also posted a Buddhist Bulletin with interesting articles. They invited Ven. Shinjan as their instructor.

—*Cor.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Udumbara—Tales of Buddhist Japan by Kosho Yamamoto, The Bodhi Series, Tsukiji Honganji, Tokyo, 1959, 90 pages.

SENTIMENT is the keynote of this collection. Some of the stories are charming. The author's unfamiliarity with the foreign language in which he presents these tales of Japan is a drag on them. Still, generally speaking, the book is readable. Hakuin (the story of the innocent teacher of the way who, out of compassion, let himself be known for a bad man), and Beyond the Pale of Vengeance, are touching. These together with The Bamboo Grove, Grafting, To Give, and even the Five Precepts (about Ekai Kawaguchi, the Zen priest and traveller in Tibet, who at 79 was editing a Tibetan-Japanese Dictionary) are the best of the bunch.

ACYUTA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEVA WORSHIP

I.

Please allow me to place before your readers a few comments on the question of Deva worship which has been raised in the correspondence page of your esteemed journal, as this practice appears to be widely prevalent among Buddhists of the present day.

A Buddhist is a person who has taken refuge in the Buddha, Teacher of gods and men, His teachings the Dhamma and His community of disciples, the Sangha. The whole of the Teaching of the Buddha is contained in the Four Noble Truths, (1) Sorrow, (2) Cause of Sorrow *i.e.* Craving or Taṇhā, (3) Cessation of Sorrow *i.e.* Nirodha or Nibbāna, and (4) The Way to that Cessation, the Noble Eight-fold Path. The mission of a Buddha is to realise these Four Truths and proclaim them to the world. On numerous occasions the Buddha declared that He teaches only two things, Sorrow and The Cessation of Sorrow. Now, the Cessation of Sorrow or Nirodha can be achieved only by the eradication of Taṇhā or Craving. "Taṇhā, Pahānaṁ, Ayaṁ, Vuccati Nirodho." Thus every good Buddhist should strive to eradicate Craving.

Those Buddhists who visit temples of deities at Kataragama, Lunawa, and other places with devotion frequently and make offerings in cash and kind, do so in order to obtain some material benefits and are, therefore, impelled by Craving.

Far from striving to eradicate Craving they give full rein to it and thereby prolong this ceaseless cycle of birth and death with all the misery and suffering attendant thereon. It is patent that in seeking worldly gain, profit, honour, and position through divine aid they are not practising Buddha's exhortation to eradicate Craving.

SIRI PERERA.

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II.

In an empirical sense, Buddhism neither definitely asserts, nor positively denies the existence of a Creator construed either as an Omnipotent God or, as a cause-less "Cosmic Power."

In an ultimate sense, the Buddha repudiated the question of god-worship for the attainment of "Moksha"—Salvation. (*Vide* "Brahmajala" Sutta and the like). Whenever people approached the Buddha with queries (unprofitable queries relevant to an original Creator) concerning a supreme deity, He assumed silence and uttered nought either one way or the other. Is it justifiable in the absence of any precise statement (empirically speaking) from Him, to misinterpret His teaching as a totally "God-condemnatory" philosophy ?

Pandit J. SAMARAJEEWA.

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[The Bodhisatta in the Mahābodhi Jātaka refutes the theory that the world is the creation of God thus,

If there exists some Lord all powerful to fulfil

In every creature bliss or woe, and action good or ill ;

That Lord is stained with sin. Man does but work his will.

Again in the Devadaha Sutta and in other places in the Canon, the Buddha has ridiculed the idea of a Supreme Being. Is it for nothing that the Buddha was called a nāstika, an atheist, by believers in an Isvara, and an ātmam, which is behind the idea of such an absolute being ?—*The Editor, The Buddhist.*]

III.

The question raised by X. Y. Z. is of vital importance to genuine Buddhists. The mere fact of being born a Buddhist is not sufficient. He should employ his leisure to study the Dhamma, which is "excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle and excellent in the end."

The Buddha taught us the way to self-purification which leads to Deliverance. The Dhamma contains the precious ingredients necessary for self-purification. The Sangha stand for that Aryan Community who have realised self-purification.

In the pursuit for self-purification Saddhā—Confidence—in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha is an essential factor. Saddhā is not mere confidence or faith in an unseen, all-knowing and all-mighty Being—be it God or Brahma. It is confidence based on first-hand knowledge. It is based on knowing the Good Law (pariyatti), on its practice (patipatti) which leads to the realisation (pativedha) of Nibbāna, the bliss supreme.

On purity and impurity the Dhammapada says :—

Attanāva katam pāpam—attanā sanikillissati,

Attanā akatam pāpam—attanāva vissujjhati

Suddhi asuddhi paccattam—nānnamanno visodhaye.

I am indebted to the Ven'ble Nārada Maha Thera for the following illuminating translation of this verse :—

"By oneself alone is evil done, by oneself is one defiled,

By oneself is evil avoided, by oneself alone is one purified.

Purity and impurity depend on oneself,

No one can purify another."

Sir Edwin Arnold in his "Light of Asia" vividly portrays the gist of the Buddha's exposition of the Dhamma to His royal father, King Suddhodana, on the utter futility of prayer, sacrifices and offerings to gods :—

"Pray not ! the Darkness will not brighten ! Ask

Nought from the silence, for it cannot speak,

Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains !

Ah ! Brothers, Sisters ! seek

Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,

Nor, bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes,

Within yourselves deliverance must be sought ;

Each man his prison makes."

The Buddha in His final exhortation to the Disciples as recorded in the Parinibbāna Sutta says : "Abide with oneself as an island, with oneself as a refuge,

abide with the Dhamma as an island, *with the Dhamma as a refuge. Seek not for external refuge.*"

Buddhists ask the gods to share with them the merits of kusala kamma (good deeds) performed by them.

It is, therefore, abundantly clear that prayer either by oneself or through a mediator to a God or gods has no place in Buddhism.

T. H. PERERA.

IV.

One of the factors that contributed to the popularity gained by Buddhism in this Island, soon after it was introduced was that the new faith did not come into collision with the existing beliefs of the people of the time. Instead, it grew side by side with the popular cults, thereby coming into contact with the popular gods. This attitude on the part of Buddhism was itself a strong factor which led to the ultimate extinction of the new religion in the very land where it originated, namely India. And herein we notice that gods have always had a place in popular Buddhism.

Perhaps, ritual on a larger scale may have been introduced, though they were not completely absent earlier, with Gajabahu bringing to Ceylon some Chola prisoners. They would have naturally brought along with them Hindu gods and goddesses. And with Mahayanism gaining ground it was quite natural that godworship became more and more popular among the masses.

We see how even kings of an early date took a liking to be associated with gods when Tissa, during whose time Buddhism was introduced to the Island, called himself Devānāmpiya, beloved of gods. The caitya or Stupa, which, today, is the chief object of worship, in the belief that relics of Buddha are enshrined within, has, from its earliest times a "devatā koṭuwa"—enclosure for deities. Sometimes, even figures of gods are seen on these, between piasters, gods holding parasols in the earlier Stupas and merely standing in Stupa's of later times. It is also interesting to note that some of the most sublime virtues in Buddhism such as Brahmavihāra and Brahmacariyā are called after the name of Brahmas, who are said to lead pure lives. Such is the close connection between the deities and popular Buddhism.

But one important thing has to be born in mind, and that is that gods have always been subordinated to the Buddha. We have instances in Buddhistic literature where the Brahma holds the parasol over the Buddha while the four guardian deities keep a watch over Him. And it was Brahma Sahampati, the highest Buddhist deity according to the Aṭṭhakāthas and the Canonical texts, that implored Buddha to preach the doctrine to the world, when the Buddha was perturbed over not finding a listener who could understand His deep and great philosophy.

The existence of gods is recognised in the Canon and by the Buddha, too. In the Mahamangala Sutta of the Sutta nipāta we see that a certain god approached the Buddha during the middle watch of the night and put some questions to Him for the sake of clarification, after paying due respect to Him. In the Dhammapada we have "Appamādena Maghawā—devānam seṭṭhatam gato" (v. 30)—By vigilance Sakra rose to the lordship of gods (Siri Sivali translation). In the Mahāpadāna Suttanta of the Dighanikāya we see the Mahābrahma paying his respects to the Blessed Vipassi, having gone down on his right knee. "Atha kho Mahābrahmā . . . dakkhinam jānu-mandalam paṭhaviyam nibantvā, yena vipassim Bhagawatam . . . etad avoca" it runs (En. Vol. II, p. 37). "The Anguttaranikāya distinguishes five offerings," one of them being the "devatābali" (offering to deities), (J. of Sc. Vol. I, p. 128). The Blessed One on one occasion gave thanks thus: "And give the merit of his gifts to the deities who haunt the spot" (Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta of En.).

In the Mahavamsa, too, we have enough instances where gods craved for the favour of the Buddha. For example, when the Exalted One visited the Island of Lanka," the prince of devas, Mahāsumana of Sumanakuṭa mountain, who had attained to the path of salvation, craved of Him . . . something to worship." (Mv. p. 5).

As we have seen above, deities have always been recognised even by the Buddha. And also, like human beings, they, too, have been good, devout lay devotees of the Buddha. Just as much as a king would do on an occasion such as enshrining the relics, just so, on the occasion of enshrining relics in the "Mahā-thupa" of Duṭugāmunu, "Sakka, the king of gods, summoning Vissakamma caused the whole island of Lanka to be adorned in manifold ways." (Mv., p. 212). As quoted earlier, Sakra rose to the lordship of gods "by vigilance"—appamādena, in the way a disciple would have done, adhering to the last words of the Master, in search of salvation. Although deities acquire merit through such actions,, yet, unlike ordinary laymen, they need the transference of merit (anumodanā), obtained by others, too. For, in the Dighanikāya, as quoted above the Exalted One says "and give the merit of his gifts to the deities . . ." Even today, the practice of transferring one's merit over to the deities is existent, for, we utter "sabbe devā anumodantu" after offering our homage to the Buddha with incense and flowers.

Now we see that, with the recognition of the existence of deities and also as a result of the tolerance as seen in Buddhism, godworship has been existing right throughout its history. Even though Ceylon is regarded as the seat of orthodox Buddhism even today, it is not surprising that god-worship should find a prominent place in popular Buddhism. It has gained so much of importance that in every house where there is an image of the Buddha, there are also pictures of popular gods such as Vishnu, hanging on the walls.

Further we know that Sakra was entrusted with the guardianship of Lanka and also the dispensation by the Buddha himself. Mahavamsa records it as follows:

"Patiṭṭhissati devinda Laṅkāyaṃ mama sāsanam,

Tasmā saparivārantaṃ rakkha Lankaṃ ca sādhukaṃ."

and Sakra handed over the responsibility to god Uppalavanna. In this instance it is interesting to note how Indra, a Hindu war-god has become a devout devotee of Buddha. One of the epithets to Indra is "Purandara" which means destroyer of cities. In being transformed to a Buddhist god he came to be called as "Purandada"—giver of cities. Thus Indra, due to the important place he holds among the Hindu gods was taken to be a Buddhist god.

All my arguments so far were to show that gods have had a place in Buddhism from a very early date. But the important thing to be remembered is that gods have always held only a subsidiary position to Buddha and that god-worship has never been able to displace the position held by Buddhism or its tenets as laid down in the doctrine. However much one may be a worshipper of gods, he will yet be a devout Buddhist, too.

S. H. J. SUGUNASIRI.

Y.M.B.A. Hostel,
Colombo.

BUDDHA'S WORDS OF WISDOM

This little book (already referred to in your magazine) gives in a nutshell the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. In this frightening age of speed and scepticism, when even the section of the cultural world does not have the time to think of the problems of life this book provides the opportunity even to the ordinary man preoccupied with his own personal problems, to obtain a fair knowledge of what Buddhism actually is and actually teaches.

The intelligent reader, whatever his religious affiliations may be, cannot fail to be impressed by the fact that in these sayings of the Buddha there are no dogmas or claims to blind belief and that the conquest of individualism is the central feature of Buddha's teaching.

Written in elegant language this book is capable of subserving the religious needs of the busy man both in the East and the West.

H. A. C. WICKREMERATNE,

St. James',
Kandy.

"He abused me, he struck me, he overpowered me and he robbed me" those who harbour such thoughts do not still their hatred.

The foolish and the ignorant indulge in heedlessness; but the wise one keeps his vigilance as his best treasure.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

24.8.1959 : K. P. Sumanapala, (Life Member), Wewakelle Estate, Makola, Kadawata ; L. R. Perera, (Life Member), Delgoda, *via* Gampaha ; D. K. Gunasekera, 47/4, Galle Road, Bambalapitiya, Colombo ; Piyadasa Herat, New Borella Flats, Borella, Colombo.

8.9.1959 : H. Rajakaruna, Kitulgala ; R. M. S. Gunawardene, 24/2A, Fredrica Road, Wellawatte ; C. S. Fernando, 7, Udurawana Road, Wattegama.

14.9.1959 : Dr. V. T. Perera, (Life Member), 61, Albion Road, Colombo 9 ; L. S. Gunaratne, No. 13, Kaluwadumulla, Ambalangoda ; W. E. M. Abeysekere, 29, Circular Road, Mt. Lavinia.

21.9.58 : G. V. A. Pieris, 56, De Alwis Place, Dehiwala ; W. A. Edward Silva, "Chandrika," 42, Vajira Road, Colombo ; W. S. Hewapathirana, 88, Deans Road, Colombo 10.

FORT BUILDING FUND

The following contributions are acknowledged with thanks :—Mr. J. P. Fernando Rs. 15 ; A friend Re. 1 ; Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya Rs. 500 ; Ceylon Match Co. Ltd. Rs. 500.

ASIA FOUNDATION

A PARTY of nearly one hundred members and wives met at the Mount Lavinia Hotel on Sunday, September 13, at lunch to bid farewell to Mr. W. F. Fleming, the outgoing Director of the Asia Foundation in Colombo, and to welcome his successor, Mr. Lazaroff and his wife. Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya, President, who was chairman, paid tribute to Mr. Fleming for the keen interest he had evinced in the Fort Building Scheme and also extended a warm welcome to Mr. Lazaroff. Mr. Fleming, replying, spoke of his cordial relations with the Y.M.B.A. especially with Sir Cyril De Zoysa. Mr. Lazaroff promised to carry on the good relations established by his predecessor.

Pali and Sanskrit Classes

The Pali and Sanskrit Classes for beginners are conducted every Tuesday and Thursday—Pali Class at 6.20 p.m. and Sanskrit Class at 5.15 p.m. Tuition fees for one subject is Rs. 7/50 and for both subjects Rs. 10/-. Payment should be made on or before the 30th of every month. Classes are open to either sex. For further particulars, please write to the Hony. Secretary, Literary Activities, Y.M.B.A. Colombo 8.

කවි සංවාදය

ඔක්තෝබර් මස 2 වැනි සිකුරාදා සවස 5 සිට 7 දක්වා දිවයිනේ ප්‍රසිද්ධ හිටිවන කවි කීමේ සමත් මහතුන් ට ආරාධනය කිරීමෙන් පැවැත්වෙන මෙම කවි සන්ධ්‍යාව සාමාජික මහතුන්ගේත් මහජනයාගේත් සතුටට කාරණයක් වනු ඇතැයි අපි බලාපොරොත්තු වෙමු. මේ පිළිබඳ විස්තර යථා කාලයේ දී පුවත් පත් මගින් ඔබට දැනගත හැකිය.

Light of Asia Elocution Contest

Entries for the Annual Light of Asia Elocution Contest close on October 10, 1959.

The Junior Section is open to boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16 years ; and the Senior Section to those between 16 and 21 years. The Semi-finals will be held on October 17, 1959, and the Finals on October 24, 1959. Winners in the earlier contests in this series are not eligible to compete in the same division.

OUR SORROW

WE record with profound regret the death under the most tragic circumstances of our Prime Minister, the Hon. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike.

Mr. Bandaranaike was a member of the Colombo Y.M. B.A. for many years. His first public lecture shortly after his return from Oxford in 1925 was under the auspices of our English Literary Branch, of which Mr. S. B. Ranasinha was Secretary at the time.

සිංහල පද්‍ය ගායනා තරඟය:

මෙම මූලික තරඟය නොවැම්බර් මස 7 වැනි සෙනසුරාදා පෙරවරු 9 ට පැවැත්වේ. අවසාන තරඟය නොවැම්බර් මස 21 වැනි සෙනසුරාදා පස්වරු 4 ට පවත්වනු ලැබේ. ඉල්ලුම් පත් භාර ගන්නා අවසාන දිනය ඔක්තෝබර් මස 20 වැනි දය. කණිෂ්ඨ, ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ ශිෂ්‍ය, ශිෂ්‍යාවන්ට මේ තරඟයට ඉදිරිපත් විය හැකිය.

වයස සීමාව: කණිෂ්ඨ අවුරුදු 10 සිට 16 දක්වා විය යුතුය.
ජෙෂ්ඨ අවුරුදු 16 සිට 21 දක්වා විය යුතුය.

මීට ප්‍රථම වරී වලදී ප්‍රථම ත්‍යාගය දිනාගත් අයට එම කොටස සඳහා මෙවර තරඟ කිරීමට නුපුළුවන.

Lecture—By Mr. R. G. de S. Wettimuni, A.M.I. Mech. E. on "Problem of the Concept" at 6 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 1959, at the Association Hall.

ඔක්තෝම්බර් මස ධර්ම දේශනා

4 වැනි ඉරු දින ගරු පිටකෝට්ටේ සෝමානන්ද හිමිපාණෝ

11 ,, ,, ,, ගරු පණ්ඩිත රැද්දැල්ලේ පඤ්ඤාලෝකහිමිපාණෝ

18 ,, ,, ,, ගරු පණ්ඩිත වෙඩරුමේ අනෝමදස්සී හිමිපාණෝ

25 ,, ,, ,, ගරු හිනටියන ධම්මාලෝක හිමිපාණෝ

ඉහත සඳහන් ඉරු දිනයන්හි උදේ 9 සිට 10 දක්වා තරුණ බෞද්ධ සමිති ශාලාවේදී මෙම ධර්ම දේශනා පවත්වනු ලැබේ.

වප් පොහෝ දින වැඩ පිළිවෙල

ඔක්තෝම්බර් මස 15 බ්‍රහස්පතින්දා :

උදේ 7.30 ට භාවනාවේ යෙදීම — ගරු කුඩාවැල්ලේ වංගීස හිමිපාණන්ගේ අනුශාසකත්වයෙනි.

,, 9.00 ට ධර්මදේශනය — ගරු කරපුටුගල ධම්මවංස නායක හිමිපාණෝ.

සවස 2.00 ට ධර්ම සාකච්ඡාව — ගරු විනයාචාර්ය දෙඔගොඩ ශ්‍රී රේවත හිමිපාණන්ගේ ප්‍රධානත්වයෙනි.

,, 3.30 ට ධර්ම දේශනය — ගරු පණ්ඩිත තලල්ලේ ධම්මනන්ද හිමිපාණෝ.

,, 4.30 ට භාවනාවේ යෙදීම — ගරු කුඩාවැල්ලේ වංගීස හිමිපාණන්ගේ අනුශාසකත්වයෙනි.

,, 6.00 ට බුද්ධ පූජා පැවැත්වීම සහ ආගමික පිළිවෙත් පිරීම.

,, 6.30 ට කොළඹ කොටුවේ විහාර මන්දිරයේ මල් පහන් ආදියෙන් යුත් බුද්ධ පූජාවක් පැවැත්වීම.

දුවල් දානය සමිතිය මගින් පිළියෙල නොකරන බව කරුණාවෙන් සලකනු මැනවි.

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